

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 18, 2023

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We appreciate the Department of State's effort to keep members of Congress apprised of the situation in Israel and Palestine. Several of us attended the Bipartisan Classified Member Briefing offered on October 12, 2023. However, we are concerned about the lack of meaningful information provided by the Department on the status of civilians, particularly those in Gaza and the West Bank, and the status of American citizens in Palestine.

We formally request that the Department provide a subsequent Member-level briefing specific to the status of civilians, particularly those in Gaza and the West Bank, and the status of American citizens in Israel and Palestine. We request it happen in the next 5 business days, given the urgent need for this information.

We would like to formally request the Department of State answer the following questions, which have, until this point, gone insufficiently answered:

- Given the developments of the weekend, what is the status of efforts to evacuate Americans, particularly the 500 Palestinian-Americans in Gaza?
- What is the status of all hostages in the region, and what is the Department of State doing to ensure their safe release?
- What is the current status of negotiations with Egypt related to the safe passage of people and humanitarian supplies through the Rafah Gate?
- What is the US doing to ensure corridors for the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gazans?
- What is the status of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, particularly in regard to the safety of the Palestinian people and the measures being taken to protect them from the potential for settler violence?
- Who is responsible for monitoring the human rights violations that relate to access to food, fuel, and water availability in Gaza?
- What measures are the United States taking to facilitate the work of the United Nations, Red Cross, and other human rights organizations in Gaza?
- What support is the US willing to provide to ensure or enforce that Gazans who have been displaced or evacuated have a right to return?
- How many children have been killed as a result of Hamas' attack and the Israeli siege and airstrikes that followed?
- Will the Department of State secure permission for up to 12 staff from humanitarian groups to work in Al-Arish/Rafah and secure permission to fly medical donations and other critical supplies into Al-Arish?

We understand that you and your department are working to address these pressing issues and uphold our nation's interests. We look forward to a subsequent briefing when your office can sufficiently address these unanswered questions to provide a fuller picture of the situation in the region.

Thank you for your attention and swift action on this matter.

Sincerely,

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Delia C. Ramirez  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Summer Lee".

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Summer Lee  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rashida Tlaib".

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Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress